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ABSTRACT

High school and college students often are handicapped by their lack of or misuse of reading skills when using textual materials as learning resources. This paper describes the development of two investigative procedures that help individuals to identify, systematize, and overcome their reading problems. One procedure consists of intensive group interviews for eliciting reading difficulties. Twelve major categories of reading-for-learning problems are identified and mapped onto a model of the reading process to produce a "taxonomy of reading problems." The other procedure is an individualized approach that uses "biographical narrative" to elicit personal awareness of reading-for-learning problems. These two tools offer different approaches to heighten individual awareness of individual reading difficulties and to develop reading competency: the group interview and taxonomy serve as external referents, showing the student what problems to look for, while the "biographical narrative" provides direct evidence that particular reading problems exist. The first part of the paper presents the findings of the group interviews and shows how the taxonomy was constructed, and the second part of the paper presents an example of "biographical narrative." (RL)

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO READING-FOR-LEARNING PROBLEMS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF TWO AWARENESS-RAISING TOOLS.

by -

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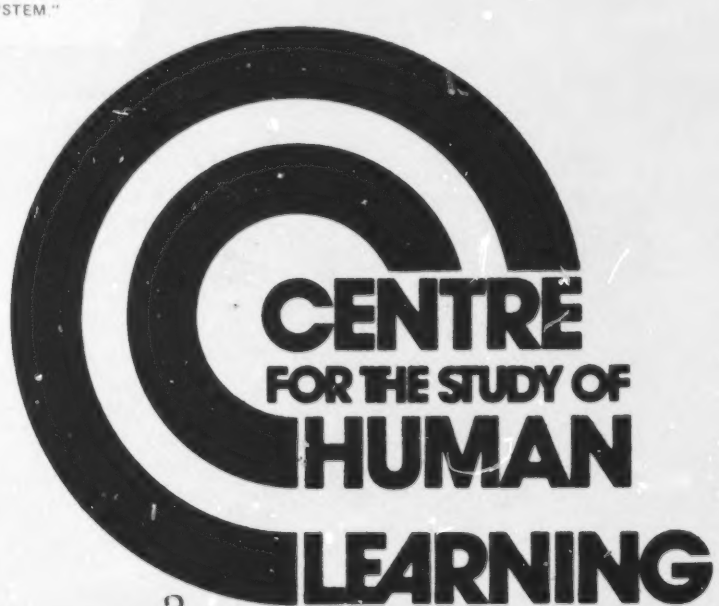

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SUMMARY

A three-year action research study, concerned with developing reading competence, revealed some interesting findings about the range and nature of student reading difficulties. Two investigatory procedures were developed for the identification of reading problems, for systematising and personalising these problems, and for the development of awareness-raising tools for incorporation into Reading-for-Learning Courses. One procedure consisted of intensive group interviews for eliciting reading difficulties. Twelve major categories of reading problems were identified. These were mapped onto a model of the reading process, to produce a Taxonomy of Reading Problems. The other procedure was individual and used a Biographical Narrative to elicit problems. These two tools offer different approaches for heightening awareness of individual reading difficulties. The Biography was designed to evoke personal experience, whilst the Taxonomy extended the field of awareness by offering an external category system as a referent. The first part of the paper presents the findings of the group interviews and shows how the Taxonomy was constructed. The follow-up part of the paper presents the Biographical Narrative. The paper highlights the issue that students are seriously handicapped by their lack of skill in using text as a resource for learning. It also offers two useful tools for helping learners to become more aware of their reading difficulties. This is an important first step for developing reading competency. It is suggested that the Taxonomy of Reading Problems and the Biographical Narrative could usefully be incorporated into the learning resources available for those engaged in secondary and tertiary education.

An Investigation into Reading-for-Learning Problems: The Development of Two Awareness-raising Tools

Introduction

A three-year action research study concerned with offering school pupils and students in higher education opportunities for improving their use of reading as a learning skill (1), revealed some interesting findings about reading difficulties. The long-term aim of the study was to develop Reading-for-Learning Courses which could ultimately be incorporated into the curricula of educational institutions beyond the primary school. The learner-centred approach was based on the assumption that everyone can learn how to learn, but that for most people the achievement of competency depends upon a highly rigorous yet flexible pedagogy. Within this general framework, Reading-for-Learning was seen as one important basic skill.

Earlier investigations (2) demonstrated that many school pupils, higher education students and adults in everyday and professional life, operate well below their potential in the use of reading as a learning skill. People tend to stabilise into routines of reading, which are limited in their range and effectiveness. Seldom do they bring these reading habits under review. It takes a major confrontation, such as failing an examination, to shake the learner from his complacency. The outcome is often bewilderment, anxiety, anger or even alienation from the educational system. Confronted with their apparent inadequacy, pupils and students are often unable to review their skills and develop competency. Only vaguely aware of methods for reading, they experience difficulty in consciously varying their strategies according to their purpose. If a text appears complicated, or the purpose ill-defined and obscure, they often give up. A negative attitude towards learning, combined with inadequate skills, contribute to the ineffective reading experiences of the majority of the learning population.

Awareness by the individual of the process of reading is important for developing competency. Self-observation inevitably highlights individual reading difficulties, and this is an essential step towards improving reading skills. However, for the untutored and unpractised, self-observation during reading is immensely difficult. It is necessary to acquire the skill of dividing one's attention between attributing meaning to the text and observing how one is attributing this meaning! This skill in self-observation derives from a modelling method, i.e. a symbolic representational language system, to describe and analyse reading experience and behaviour (3). School pupils and college students are seldom given the opportunity to develop such a language and, as a result, they experience considerable difficulty in diagnosing their own reading problems and in improving their reading skills. This language is not just an accumulation of a new set of terms and vocabulary but becomes for the learner a powerful descriptive system for conceptualising the process of learning. The awareness-raising activities whereby a process language is developed, have been virtually ignored in secondary and tertiary education. Despite recent attempts to rectify this by the Reading Development Course Team of The Open University and other innovators in the 'Reading World', there remains a very real gap in the educational curriculum between "learning to read" on the one hand and "reading to learn" on the other.

The Reading-for-Learning Courses developed and evaluated in the action research study (1) were intended to contribute towards bridging this gap. They were designed around a series of awareness-raising tools and a generative and hierarchical Model of the reading process. The pedagogical approach was 'conversational' (3). A Reading Recorder provides a record of how a text is read and offers the learner an opportunity to introspect the process in which the eyes move over the page. A Flow Diagram

technique provides an opportunity for the reader to display the 'Structure of Meanings' he is attributing to a text. A Purpose Taxonomy and Hierarchy provides procedures for articulating reading purposes. Kelly repertory grids and Thomas grid focusing techniques elicit the reader's attitudes and beliefs about learning from print. These tools, the model and the methodology of the Learning Conversation are reported in detail elsewhere (4). This paper shows how another type of awareness-raising tool, based upon the elicitation and analysis of 'reading problems', was developed and incorporated into the Courses, during the action research study.

As the series of Courses was implemented and evaluated, it gradually became clear that learners were unable to describe or diagnose their reading difficulties in any clear, sensible and usable way. The need for a type of tool which would assist learners in identifying their own reading problems became apparent. The two investigations reported in this paper show how Taxonomy of Reading Problems. and the Biographical Narrative, were developed to meet this need. Together these contribute powerful additions to the library of awareness-raising tools, which forms the underpinnings for the Reading-for-Learning Courses developed at the Centre.

Two Methods of Investigation

The purpose of the two types of investigatory procedures was to generate solid and wide ranging empirical data about reading problems, and to systematise and personalise these problems so that they can be used as an effective and valid basis for creating two awareness-raising tools. In the first investigation intensive group interview techniques were employed to elicit reading difficulties. This group elicitation procedure was designed to diagnose strengths and weaknesses

of habits, attitudes, and strategies of Reading-for-Learning. This procedure was systematised to yield frequency data and deliver 4 - 7 separate 'problem items' per student, which could be analysed, categorised and built into a Taxonomy. In the second investigation the biographical technique was designed to evoke personal experience in an individual form. Whilst the participants were asked to try to observe their own Reading-for-Learning activities over a period of two weeks and report on these freely, some categories were offered to guide them in their self-observation. They were asked to observe the range of items read, the variety of purposes for reading, the difficulties experienced with the text, or inherent in themselves, and the importance of each reading event in the context of their total 'learning life'.

When the Taxonomy of Reading Problems was used as an initial awareness-raiser within the ongoing Course on Reading-for-Learning, it was found to be too stylised, systematic and remote from individual needs to awaken sympathetic chords in students' own experiences. The 'problems' remained academic. It also became apparent that students readily took over these offered problems, and there was always the danger that these were not central for each individual. The researchers also felt that the quality of the group interview discussions for eliciting reading problems had a reality and vividness, which was lost in the systematic categories of the Taxonomy. The biographical technique was introduced to generate real evidence which retained the quality and immediacy of individual reading problems. These procedures provided two different approaches to the heightening of awareness of reading problems. In the later Courses the

biographical approach was used as an initial awareness-raiser of individual reading difficulties and the Taxonomy was used as a tool for an extension of awareness of these difficulties, by offering an external referent, against which individuals could check their own reading experiences.

This first half of the paper presents the findings of the group interviews and shows how a Taxonomy of Reading Problems was constructed. The second half of the paper presents the individual Reading-for-Learning diaries in the form of a Biographical Narrative. The Taxonomy and the Narrative can be used to help learners to become more aware of their reading difficulties. The results of the investigation highlight the issue, that learners are seriously handicapped by their lack of skill in using text as a resource for learning.

Developing a Taxonomy of Reading-for-Learning Problems

The Procedure

Sixty College of Education students participated in the investigation. These were recruited from 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th years. There were 38 men and 22 women. They were divided into five groups according to alphabetical order. The five groups of 12 students spent one 2-hour session discussing their learning problems, with particular reference to reading. A member of the research staff from the Centre led each group. The researchers had previously agreed on their strategy for eliciting the reading problems. Brain-storming, free association, analytic and anecdotal techniques were employed. In each session it rapidly became clear that almost everybody felt that they had serious problems. At the end of the session, each student was asked to submit 4 - 7 of the most personally relevant 'problems', each on a separate card. A total of 415 responses were obtained. A rough eye-ball sort

was carried out by two of the researchers. A two-level category system was ultimately arrived at. The responses were first divided into rough piles, with a few miscellaneous items. They were re-shuffled and re-sorted until a system of major categories emerged. Each category was then classified, i.e. given a definitive name. The responses within each of these major categories were then sorted and classified, to give sub-categories. Two other researchers used this category system to sort the 415 response cards. Ninety-five per cent agreement on all twelve major categories and eighty-five per cent agreement on all sub-categories was achieved. The remainder were negotiated between all four sorters till a satisfactory compromise was arrived at. Any miscellaneous items were then discarded. The classification is presented in the Result Section, in order of number of responses falling into each major category. By mapping the twelve categories on to the Model of the Reading-for-Learning process used in the Courses, the major categories were found to cluster into an interesting pattern. This is shown in Fig.1 in the Result Section.

Thus, a three level category system, giving a Taxonomy of Reading-for-Learning Problems was arrived at. This summarises the reading problems that were revealed by the investigation, within a systematic framework.

Results

A Classified List of Items Elicited from 60 College of Education Students for Difficulties they Encountered using Reading as a Learning Skill

Major Categories	Sub Categories	Total Number of Responses
1. Process	Learn better if reading accompanied by discussion, peers or staff.	83
	Confused by authors' style.	
	Often unable to review the reading experience.	
	More reading leads to less understanding.	
	Requires rest after periods of from 15 - 45 minutes.	
	Slow at reading.	
	Too much time spent on note -making.	
	Needing to re-read a number of times.	
	Has difficulty in reading aloud.	
	Ignores details.	
	Reads too quickly.	
	Nothing going in, lack of comprehension.	
	Gets too engrossed and cannot put book down.	
	Emotional pressures bias meaning attribution.	
	Tries to be selective, but unsure of criteria.	
	Unaware of author signposts.	
2. Structure and Organisation of Material.	Forced to use too difficult material.	69
	Doesn't like large chapters without sections.	
	Inadequate summaries in texts.	

Major Categories	Sub Categories	Total Number of Responses
2. Structure and Organisation of Material (cont'd.)	Difficulty in pulling out features (major and minor).	
	Assumes a certain basic knowledge.	
	Despair at pages full of words.	
	Complicated writing, waffly.	
	Inadequate knowledge of references.	
	Poor relationship between diagrams and the text.	
	Irritated by small print.	
3. Selection	Conflicting priorities for reading.	42
	Pressure of other assignments.	
	Have never been taught how to use a library, therefore unable to select right books.	
	Gets side-tracked into reading irrelevant texts.	
	Difficult to connect suggested reading to the rest of the course.	
	Never review accessing skills, tend to handle all books in same way, therefore unable to select relevant parts effectively.	
	Often unable to use semantic cues in a text.	
4. Hang-ups.	Couldn't be bothered to have an eye test.	37
	Don't like glasses.	
	Don't care about poor lighting, prefer dark atmosphere.	
	Hang-ups about seating positions, got to smoke, got to scratch my head.	

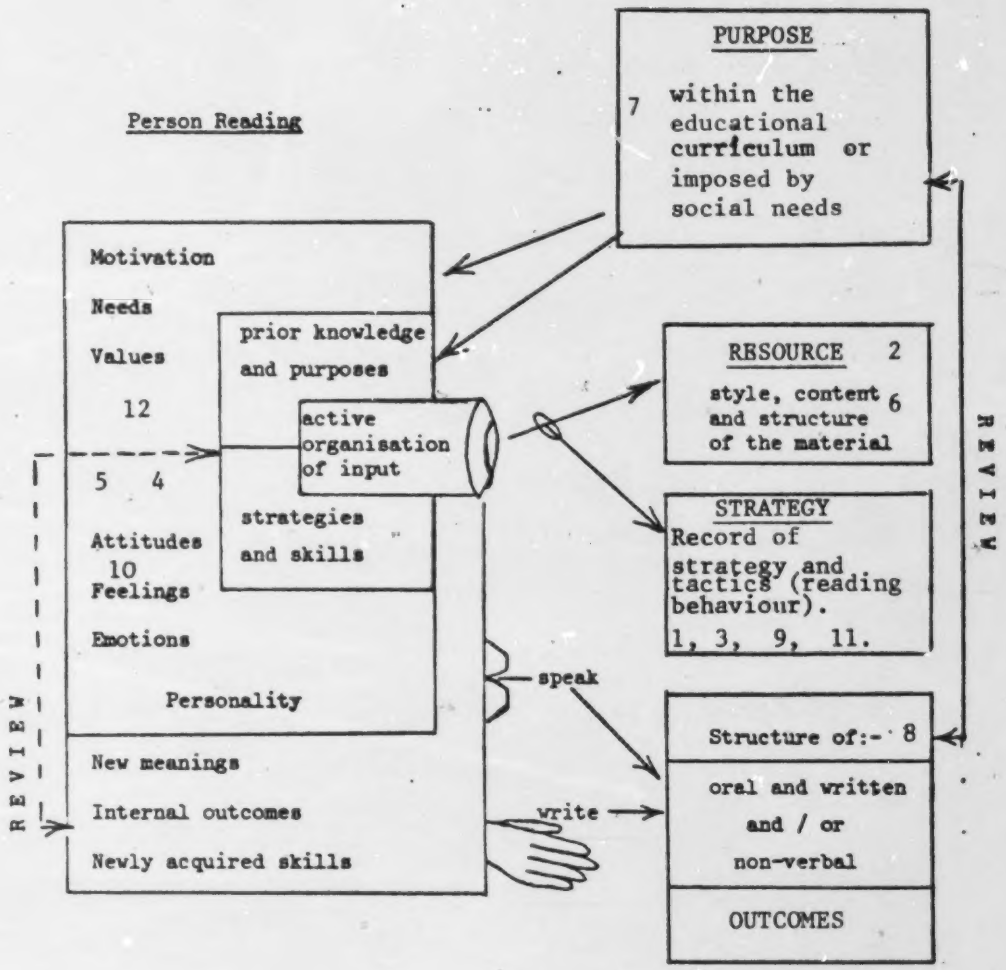
Major Categories	Sub Categories	Total Number of Responses
5. Distraction	Finding time to read.	36
	Bar, women, music, family, shopping.	
	People talk to me.	
	Can't read in silence.	
	Noise whilst reading.	
6. Terminology	Irritated by excessive jargon.	28
	New terminology, not defined in text.	
	Differing terminology in same subject.	
	Reading words wrongly; incorrect meanings.	
7. Reading Purposes	Unable to articulate a specific purpose for reading.	27
	Unable to distinguish between formal and informal reading.	
	Equate reading for pleasure with novels and reading for learning with text books.	
	Usual text-book reading to do with summarising.	
	Seldom review outcomes against purpose.	
8. Outcome	Slow in remembering	21
	Cannot bring material to mind when wanted.	
	Forget detailed information such as dates, names, places etc.	
	Remembering different things at different times from the same text.	

Major Categories	Sub Categories	Total Number of Responses
9. Passivity	Often inadequately defined purposes for reading.	20
	Allows the author to take over, abdicates responsibility.	
	Provisional plans seldom followed through and seldom reviewed afterwards.	
	Never think about <u>how</u> to retrieve information from a book.	
10. Boredom	Loses interest at the sight of a text-book.	19
	Bored, tired, sleepy, when reading anything.	
	Difficult to concentrate.	
	Hard to get interested, or to get started, in the mood.	
	Disinterest in reading for mundane information!	
11. Inflexibility	Only vaguely aware of reading method.	17
	Cannot adapt method to text and purpose.	
	Usually go through set routine of using a library.	
	Tend to read any book or article from beginning to end.	
12. Physiological and Physical.	Tired eyes	16
	Poor lighting.	
	Uncomfortable seating.	
	Physically tired.	

Problems of Process (category 1) and Structure and Organisation of Material (category 2), averaged above one for each person taking part. The average for Selection (category 3), Hang-ups (category 4) and Distraction (category 5) was about two-thirds for each person. Terminology (category 6) and Purposes (category 7) averaged around one half, whilst Output (category 8), Passivity (category 9), Boredom (category 10) was approximately one third, for each participant. Finally, Inflexibility (category 11) and Physical and Physiological (category 12) averaged about one quarter.

The Taxonomy of Reading Problems

Whilst the distribution of problems is interesting, no great weight can be given to these individual proportions. Obviously, elicitation techniques were bound to influence these. The more important findings lie in the range and nature of problems exposed and in the potential for a taxonomical description which can be related to components of the reading process. These relationships are shown in Fig.1 which illustrates the major components of a 'Purpose - Strategy - Outcome - Review' Model as it applies to Reading-for-Learning.



1 - 12: Major Categories of Reading Problems

Fig.1. MAPPING CATEGORIES OF READING PROBLEMS ON TO A MODEL OF THE READING-FOR-LEARNING PROCESS

The quality and range of Purposes (category 7) which a reader can generate will influence the richness of his response to print. Students have a limited repertoire of reading purposes and experience difficulty in articulating specific reading purposes. THEY SELDOM REVIEW NEWLY ACQUIRED MEANINGS AGAINST THEIR READING PURPOSES, largely because they are unaware except in the vaguest terms, of these purposes.

As a person reads he is predicting meanings that are represented by the printed Resource. Students encounter difficulties with the Structure and Organisation (category 2) and Terminology (category 6) of this resource. Often, they are unable to pursue Strategies for overcoming these difficulties; they get bogged down by the welter of problems, become bored, anxious and frequently give up.

Different Purposes for reading lead to different kinds of processing of the linear strings of hieroglyphics or the printed resource. These are sampled, selected and related in order to attribute new meanings. The Strategies of reading behaviour determine this active organisation of the input, (the hieroglyphics on the page). Students experience difficulties of Process (category 1) and Selection (category 3). They also complain of Inflexibility (category 11) and Passivity (category 9). Reading behaviour is determined by Purpose, and Strategy, and is influenced by the 'here and now' motivation, needs, attitude and values of the person reading. Hang Ups (category 4), Distractions (category 5), Boredom (category 10) and Physiological and Physical difficulties (category 12) are all negative influences on the affective domain of the reader.

The primary Outcomes of reading are the changes which take place in what a reader thinks, knows and feels. Students have difficulties

in Reveiwing these Outcomes (category 8) and in externalising these in a structure and form which adequately describes them.

Although PURPOSE partially determines STRATEGY and this influences OUTCOME, these components of the reading process must be conceived of as CO-EXISTING. Purpose is seldom finally clarified till the outcome is achieved. A development of reading competence depends on REVIEWING this process, so that subsequent attempts at reading are improved. THESE ATTEMPTS SHOULD IN TURN BE REVIEWED, CREATING A PROGRESSIVE AND CUMULATIVE PROCESS OF CHANGE. Students admit that this process of review is seldom implemented. Unreviewed, the reading process becomes totally non-conscious, and habits of reading which are limited in range and effectiveness, dominate a person's reading behaviour.

Discussion

Text is a major resource for tapping vicariously a vast store of human experience. Tens of thousands of school pupils and higher education students, young and not so young, learn by reading. The quality and range of purposes which they can generate together with effectiveness in processing this resource will influence the richness of their response to print. Yet the sample of college students, which may be taken as fairly representative of the learning population as a whole, are hardly aware of the many and varied purposes for reading, nor of the range of possible strategies for achieving effective outcomes. These students were never taught how to read for learning.

Basic reading skills are taught between the ages of 6 and 10 years, and is usually confined to the primary school years. These reading skills remain stunted and partially developed. The skills

that readers do possess, fall into non-consciousness, apparently irretrievably when the exponents of the skills find it almost impossible to explain how any results are achieved. This applies to all much practised skills. The adolescent and adult reader has ceased to be aware of the cues and sub-skills that he or she is relying on and is unable to move up and down the levels of skill organisation in order to attend to reading difficulties.

Most readers find it difficult to explain how and why they read. Descriptions are vague and fragmented. They are unaware of the complexity of their reading behaviour and they believe that simplistic and general descriptions are adequate. DESPITE THE MASSIVE PRACTICE OF READING IN THEIR DAILY ROUTINES, STUDENTS LACK THE LANGUAGE TO ANALYSE THEIR READING DIFFICULTIES AND DESCRIBE THEIR READING BEHAVIOUR. This applies to:-

the overall survey and accessing skills;
the articulation of specific reading purposes;
the immediate eye-ball to print interaction which underlies the strategy and tactics of reading behaviour;
the construction and display of reading outcomes;
and the review of the whole reading process.

Purposes for reading may involve the short-term recognition and recall of, say, signs on a motorway, questions on claim forms or information on freezer packs for supper! They may fulfil more immediately pleasurable and personally satisfying needs, offered by a Bond novel, Agatha Christie thriller, or Proustian reminiscences. Longer-term purposes for reading call for a more formal approach and depend on the recall, interpretation or evaluation of scientific or literary texts. The experiential world of Joyce, the evaluations

of Chomsky's theory or the inferences drawn from Darwinian theory, demand a rigorous and sophisticated processing of the texts. Students complain that they are handicapped across the whole range of purposes, and that they lack the skills for adapting their strategy of reading behaviour according to their purpose and to the structure and organisation of their chosen printed resource. They are unaware of the many and various ways of perusing the text for cues to help their understanding of it, with reference to their purposes. The semantic and syntactic context cues within and between sentences often remain hidden from them. Signposts by the author are often ignored. The meaning generated as a result of reading seldom relates effectively to their purpose for reading. These purposes often remain vague and unarticulated, and in common with Perry's findings with Harvard Freshmen (5) they either wallow in 'obedient purposelessness' or demonstrate 'positive misconceptions' about Reading-for-Learning. The consequences of their ineffective reading can be detrimental to their academic career and everyday life.

Some students compensate for their reading difficulties by relying on formal instruction (lectures, films, tapes) and on discussion (seminars, tutorials and coffee chats). Many get by on partially adequate skills for learning, by reading, listening and talking. Some fail and, confronted with their inadequate skills, they become bewildered, confused and ultimately totally alienated from the educational system.

Implications

The findings of the action research project have shown that people can learn-to-learn (1). An awareness of the range and nature of

reading difficulties is an important first step for developing competency in Reading-for-Learning. Given awareness-raising tools for exploring their reading difficulties, experiences and behaviour, students can improve their competency by as much as 300 - 500%. This has a long-term pay off on their general academic performance. The Taxonomy of Reading Problems reported in this part of the paper and the Biographical Narrative reported in the next part of the paper, have proved to be useful tools for:-

(i) refining a Model of the reading process,

(ii) diagnosing individual reading difficulties,

(iii) heightening awareness of reading behaviour and experience,

(iv) constructing specific exercises within major problem areas,

(v) selecting appropriate exercises for individual needs

(vi) evaluating the effectiveness of a Course, as 'before' and 'after' measures of change,

(vii) helping student teachers to gain insights into the reading problems of others, in particular school pupils, students and illiterate adults.

The findings of the project demonstrate the usefulness of this type of tool within Reading-for-Learning Courses(1). The library of awareness-raising tools developed for these Courses could be used by the Learning Resources Centres in schools and colleges.

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This is the second part of the Paper based on an investigation of Reading-for-Learning Problems. The first part was printed in the previous issue .....

An Investigation into Reading-for-Learning Problems:

The Development of two Awareness-raising Tools (contd.)

A Biographical Narrative: One Day in the Inner and Outer Life of X-Student

Introduction

A three-year action research study concerned with offering school pupils and higher education students opportunities for improving their use of reading as a learning skill (1) revealed some interesting findings about reading difficulties. The long term aim of the study was to develop Reading-for-Learning Courses, which could ultimately be incorporated into the curricula of educational institutions beyond the primary school. The learner-centred approach was based on the assumption that everyone can learn how to learn, but that for most people the achievement of competency depends upon a highly rigorous, yet flexible pedagogy. Within this general framework, Reading-for-Learning was seen as one important basic skill.

As the series of Courses were implemented and evaluated it gradually became clear that learners were unable to describe or diagnose their reading difficulties in any clear, sensible and usable way. The need for a tool which assists in the process of problem identification became highlighted. The first of the two investigations reported in this paper used group interview procedures to elicit reading difficulties using a sample of College of Education students and showed how a Taxonomy of Reading Problems was constructed. This part of the paper describes how biographical observations were encouraged and how these were incorporated into a Biographical Narrative. Together, these two parts of the paper highlight the issue that students are seriously handicapped by their lack of skill in using text as a resource for learning.

They also serve to offer two useful tools, the Taxonomy and the Narrative, for helping students to become more aware of their reading difficulties, an important first step towards improving their competency.

The Approach

Twelve fourth year B.Ed. students, specialising in the Philosophy and Psychology of Education and one other main subject, were encouraged to keep diaries of reading events for a minimum period of two weeks. This approach was designed to evoke personal experiences in individual form. Whilst the participants were asked to try and report these freely, some categories were offered to guide them in their self-observations. They were asked to note the range of items read, purposes for reading, difficulties experienced with the text or with themselves, and the importance of each reading event in the context of their total "learning life". In order to facilitate self-observation it was suggested to them that they assumed the role of 'a third person', a sensitive intimate and sympathetic friend, who knew as much about them as they did themselves! They were reminded to talk to this friend as often as possible during the trial period so that he or she could record the narrative in a diary of learning events. In an attempt to preserve the richness of the data obtained, the student observations are deliberately reported in a free, colloquial and non-systematic context. You, the reader of this paper, are invited to interpret these observations within your own experiential framework. However, the data has been sifted and concentrated. The temporal and spatial context has been condensed to the happenings of one day. This almost surrealistic juxtaposition of learning events imparts a Joycean perspective to the Biographical Narrative here reported. This should serve to increase awareness of and focus attention on, students' Reading-for-Learning Problems.

Characters in the Biographical Narrative

The Narrator

Two Chief Conversationalists within the head of X-student.

- X The Onlooker (friend)

- X The Participant (student).

Roles played by Other Characters

1. The Consciousness Raisers (peers and tutors)

2. The Supporters of the Self-Interrogation (peers and tutors).

Narrator

X is an atypical student, only in the sense that his rapid fluctuation of mood, resulting in aggressive participation or apathetic passivity towards the learning events in his life, sets him somewhat apart. Cocooned in his book and poster-lined concrete shell, the metamorphasis planned for him by his tutors, involves him in excruciating and exhilerating growing-up pains. His academic destiny has partly been chosen for him by his parents and school teachers, yet he would not have stuck within his studious trajectory for so long, were he not driven by an urge to explore human nature, culture and his own potential as a fully-functioning being. In common with his Zek inmates, his efforts are given impetus by the kudos of the B.Ed. degree and the security promised by the apparent softness of a salaried career.

Insofar as observations of behaviour are litmus to the inner life, one would suppose that X was most of the time living in discord with his environment. His traumas are chiefly concerned with one basic dilemma which he has only partially articulated for himself: given an institutional environment how can he learn to direct his motivation

towards positive and personally satisfying needs? His inmates find themselves partially aware of the same dilemma, but each reacts in uniquely different ways. Some jogg along their 'C' graded paths, only seldom aware of their learning problems. Few, have become almost totally alienated and stay in the grant-aided spree. Others have become sucked up in the syllabus-bound system, achieving 'B' grades, and they will in their turn spew out the dogma for their pupils.

The rigid pathway genetically specified for his more lowly earth-bound co-existers is not apparently for X. Equipped by nature and by nurture to learn his use and understanding of language, a most precious and fundamental ratiocinative tool for amplifying his capacity as a human being, is both clumsy and unimaginative. Passive acceptance of that vast store of human experience recorded in books and transmitted by his tutors, would delegate him to the ranks of the 'warrior ant'. Total rejection, would delegate him to the lone fate of 'the leopard'. However, he is ill-equipped by nature for such solitary survival. It takes the genius of a Lowry to live richly in splendid isolation, with only one's imagination as a life-long companion. How can he learn to accept, reject, modify, and take-off in his own unique way? X's dilemma is made acute by the crudity of the machinery making up his learning environment. You, the reader, are asked to fasten your seat belt, for a rough ride into one day of X's world.

X - The Onlooker

At 07.00 hours the morning reveille sounded in X's head. With an almighty heave, he forced himself into consciousness. He quickly looked at his schedule for the day, mapped out on the wall in front of him. Desperate, because of his poor performance in all his

X's Schedule for the Day

Event	Goal	Plan	Implementation	Development
07.00 hrs Pre-Breakfast Reading	Survey books for essay on Language and Learning.	Use SQ_3R on selected chapters in each book.	Use 'smooth' 'item' and 'search' read tactics, make summaries.	Review procedure
	B R E A K F A S T			
09.00 hrs Lecture	What will T say about 'generative grammar'?	Think up questions before and after lecture and follow LISAN method for listening.	Anticipate what is going to be said and make notes on ideas in lecture and answer questions. If possible ask questions during lecture.	Review notes and write lecture notes as personal Meaning Map.
	C O F F E E			
10.45 hrs Seminar	Explore 'the meaning of meaning and the communication of meaning'.	Remember 5 points on how to listen and 5 points on how to discuss. Tape record bits.	Record interesting bits, watch that I don't talk too much. Stop Pete from waffling, really listen to S	Go over seminar lunch time. Remember points by using "For remembering pictures are advisable", mnemonic, F for Focus, r for recite, p for picture, a for associate and a for attitude.
		LUNCH		
14.00 -15.30 Library	Find more books for essay	Take guide sheet on how to use the literature and survey articles.	Look up indexes, abstracts, journals, theses, etc.	make notes - use O.P.Q.R.S. technique Preview, Select, Question, Organize and Review.
16.00 hrs Film	Get a general view of 'MIND'	Remember 5 points on how to watch and listen	Pay special attention to anything on Rationalists and on Chomsky.	Discuss afterwards with Pete.
17.00 hrs Tutorial	Use tutorial to go over last essay with L.	Use full list of conning techniques to get essay upgraded.	Be nice all the time and talk a lot.	check success
		S U P P E R & Led Zeppelin		
20.00hrs Draft notes for essay	Build notes into a plan.	Use relevant bits of SLOWER formula and rewrite some notes, with headings, and underline important bits. Draw a Flow Diagram.	Scrap irrelevant notes, eliminate examples, copy in references for these, watch that headings are good generalisations. Check how far I've gone on SLOWER formula.	Review the Selections. List of main ideas, order of ideas, written draft, examination of errors and review final draft.
Go on with final version of PROJECT on the OPEN SCHOOL.	Finish if possible.	Do Flow Diagram of each section and prepare illustrations.	Watch out for spelling, plagiarisms, include references	——
		GO TO BED		

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assignments last term, he was trying his best to reform. He had scoured the local bookshops and college library in vain for a resource to guide his reformation. It was at the railway station bookstall that he finally unearthed his paperback bible! He clung to this as he once did to his rag doll! He rehearsed the algorithms daily, and knew them as well as his maths tables!

Remember to be systematic.....funny thing these tutors, most of them anyway,.... if only they would teach him how to learn, and leave him along to decide what to learn! Obsessed with Skinnerian conditioning, reinforcement schedules, instrumental learning, hypothesis testing, short-term memory and serial learning, why, oh why couldn't D translate his academic sermons into an approach which would help him to learn? X consulted his schedule.....

At 07.05 X began his day, somewhat irritated as he skimmed through what he had managed to salvage from the library. He'd used the accessing system fairly effectively, according to the specifications in his bible. Three books and two journals represented his trove. These had taken him most of yesterday afternoon to locate. Most books on his set list were on loan .... there never seemed to be enough copies to go round and he never seemed to be able to beat the 'set book' rush .... too expensive to buy .... in any case .... where could he buy them .... he couldn't afford that 100 mile trip to Dillon's and there was no point in trying at the college bookstall .... last year he had faithfully bought every book on his set booklist .... most of these remained unperused on his shelf ever since .... Then alas, the library usually caught on to new trends only when these were already fully blown.... S had to lend him her own copies of Inquiring Man, Freedom-to-Learn and School is Dead for his essay on Motivation .... and that Vygotsky paper

had taken 3 months to arrive and no-one had warned him it would be in Russian.....

X stared at the small print of 'Aspects' impatiently waiting for his eyes to focus .... taking longer than usual, the light was pretty bad .... or was it the after effects of last night's booze .... he stuck his second pair of glasses on his first, ... even so, that print was still fuzzy .... he rubbed them over with his sheet .... he resolved to go to the optician soon .... as soon as he could afford to pay for those gold rimmed frames .... he got down to the nitty gritty of transformation grammar .... he felt quite good, in control, purposeful .... headings, illustrations, mathematical formulae .... he could cope with these .... ten minutes passed by and X began to bite his nails .... he lit a cigarette .... tuned in to radio three .... deformed his body into clown-like contortions .... he was only barely aware, that the pages were being flicked over with dull regularity.....

Pete

Hey .... throw me a cigarette and turn that radio off ....

X Onlooker

He came to with a nasty shock .... hell back to page five, no three .... why couldn't he concentrate .... he wanted to .... why had his mind wandered to Susie .... he really was keen on this Chomsky stuff, he'd liked S's lecture on 'mind' though he couldn't take his eyes off her tightly jeaned hips .... he had to get a good grade for this essay on Language .... O.K. .... he'd check in his bible .... strategy No.7.... breakdown each sentence, attach each phrase .... look for context cues .... the more intensely he read the less he understood .... was there a dictionary for Chomsky he wondered .... he'd found the dictionary for

Finnegan's Wake very useful .... 'constructional homonymity' .... 'finite state grammar' .... 'automata' .... 'terminal strings' .... if this was a watered down version of the unpublished original well he needed an ever more dilute concoction!

X The Participator

Hey Pete, can you stop pretending to be a COBRA for one minute and help me make sense of this jargon ....

Pete

Lyons is the answer, I'll lend you my copy after Susie's returned it .... I got the last copy on the bookstall .... never waste your time on originals .... original thinkers are not good writers anyway .... Soccer Simon gets all his stuff out of 'The Essentials of Learning'... all there in a nutshell he says, and he nearly always scrapes a 'C'.... Leave it, I'll chase Susie.....

X The Onlooker

X glanced at his second choice and shuddered .... he wouldn't have taken it off the shelf if he hadn't been desperate for material.... he'll do a smooth skim read .... pages of identical print, 17 lines to a sentence, a page and a half to a paragraph .... O.K., he'd intensify his read tactic .... first phrase by phrase, then word by word, then search backwards and forwards for cues .... funny thing he understood each word, not too much jargon here, yet when he got to the end of a sentence he hadn't a clue .... his brain felt numb .... what would D have said .... overloaded short-term memory .... perhaps he was using the wrong strategy after all ....

'The Critique' might as well have been in Gothic German print .... this heavy Germanic style .... what the hell was 'categorical imperative'....

he wasn't keen on Germans .... the way those Tubingen students had taken over that beach on Crete last summer .... anyway he wasn't keen on this type of philosophy. He shut the book with an almighty bang .... what had S said about Wittgenstein, there were limits to what thoughts could be conveyed with language .... well this guy had definitely gone beyond that limit ....

Pete

Don't give up - that one is worth reading, that guy's writing justifies his message .... he's got complicated things to say .... don't shut him out .... Kant opened the way for the Romantic Movement .... he helped shape Europe .... Darwin's Natural Selection would never have had such an influence without him .... and Marxism would not have got off the ground at all .... brain and gut begins with Kant's liberation of personality .... your Rogers' freedom-to-learn message that you rave about, would never have been thought of....

X The Participator

For me, it's unintelligible gibberish ....

Pete

Wait a sec. till I get into my LOTUS .... now let's see .... just look at those lovely monumentous sentences .... can't you see .... this sentence says .... all knowledge is relative .... this one says .... we're all embodiments of thing, per se, so .... if we listen to all of us .... brain - gut - heart .... we can approximate to the absolute .... There I've summarized two 90 word sentences ....

X The Participator

So why did he have to use all those words then .... dazzling me with rows of unsolvable riddles.

Pete

You've got to appreciate the whole context to get the message .... you've got to move step by step to get into his experiential world ... you've got to work at it ....

X The Participator

But HOW? Anyway, you mean he says 'the absolute is inside us' .... then Rogers makes sense for the classroom doesn't he?

Pete

Don't you see .... if the absolute was outside us we'd be crushed by all that dogma, we'd have to swallow all that crapp, lock stock and barrel .... but we can be free .... to chew, spew and change it all .... all because of that fellow Kant ....

X The Participator

Why can't I see what you see on that page .... damn you son of a .....

Pete

Because you don't live in my head, you systems mad robot .... I've spent half my sixth form on The Enlightenment .... whilst you crammed in those Chemistry facts .... Talk to T about Kant in tutorial .... he'll give it all to you wrapped up in lovely anecdotes .... but it will start you off on the enlightenment trail and then you'll see the light .... Have another go tomorrow morning .... after that tutorial .... soon you'll be meditating with me ....

X The Onlooker

But what about all those books he'd laboriously read and got nothing out of .... and all those books he'd chucked in because they didn't make sense .....

X The Participator

Reading is a hell of a waste of time .... I could be cuddled up to Susie ....

Pete

What gets me about reading is that I can get high, like meditation, acid, pot or woman .... only different .... understanding and not understanding .... the tension .... I wallow in it .... trouble with you is you want quick answers .... chuck in those learning recipes .... take up Yoga and ask more questions in tutorial, especially in T's.

X The Onlooker

He picked up Book No.3 with a grimace .... that Pete annoyed him .... where did he get his brains from .... just because his father was a doctor and his mother a classics teacher .... he could spew up summaries like computer punch outs .... and yet most of the time he stood on his head .... large print, good introduction, very relevant for essay, list of objectives, nice diagrams, clear author signposts, key sentences in italics .... message coming over at last .... on the seventh page, X began to wonder whether De Cecco had to spell it out in such detail .... he'd skip a bit .... he paraphrased the key sentences in his notes .... he got 80% in the multiple choice test at the end of the Chapter .... a last quick look at Chapter One of Aspects before breakfast .... he wasn't sure about generative grammar .... did generative mean creative or mathematical derivations .... or both .... ask at tutorial and get hold of Lyons .... O.K....

Narrator

X found a copy of Freedom-to-Learn during breakfast, on his table, with a note from John asking him to pass it on to Susie tomorrow. X told Pete that he'd have to forego the film .... and stay on in the library to finish off his reading for that essay on Language and Learning. X had been in the queue for that book for two weeks! X went off to T's

lecture on generative grammar. T rushed off at the end, so X lost his chance to tackle him on the meaning of 'generative'. He asked Simon and Susie at coffee time, but they found his question baffling. X hurried to his seminar on 'meaning' with S, and spent his lunch time evaluating this seminar, so that he could complete his study schedule that night.

X The Onlooker

He'd really enjoyed that seminar .... he couldn't agree with Joanna's view though .... that mass media, including print returns the human community to tribal oneness .... he'd tried to argue Solzhenitzyn's point, but he couldn't quite remember this .... it was at the tip of his tongue, yet he couldn't find the words .... he had really got it when he read that Nobel speech, last week .... Susie as usual came to his rescue .... she said that there was a yawning abyss between men .... we can't understand every word said or written by another because of our unique experiences .... words have different referents for each of us .... Solzhenitzyn implied that literature was the cure .... the truth and salvation for man .... Susie's interpretation of the Nobel speech had helped him .... it clicked once more into context .... funny they'd read it together, talked about it and she had remembered it .... could literature unite and free mankind .... too idealistic .... good hard psychological techniques were much more practical .... he was annoyed that he couldn't remember that speech in the seminar .... yet as soon as Susie spoke about it, it all came back .... was the spoken word hotter than the written word as McLuhan had said? he'd liked the technical layout of the Gutenberg Galaxy as S. had described it.... the mosaic of ideas, quotes, with freedom for reading in any order ....

but did this overcome the richness of the spoken word, perhaps rhetoric was the thing .... anyway he'd liked the idea of a non-linear presentation of print .... what a contrast to that highly programmed American text book this morning .... smooth talk .... had he been conned into a pseudo understanding .... what had S said, you've got to work hard to generate meaning inside you .... if someone else had done all the hard work, it slides over you .... everyone in the seminar agreed on the message in Models of Teaching .... was that a good or a bad thing? The Galaxy was like poetry, everyone had different ideas .... we'd ended up in a frozen silence though, just glaring ....

What had Richards said about students' appreciation of poetry .... like climbing plants without a frame .... dependent on a scaffolding of other people's opinions, teachers and critics .... why were we all so robotish .... what had S. said .... we're exposed to miles of linear print from the age of 10 years .... this conditions us to passive acceptance of public knowledge, others' meanings, no imagination, logical literal robots .... why had western society submitted to a five day week .... to rigid timetables .... and people to the conventional square box, the three piece suite, instead of yellow foamy submarines, swinging trees and long day's nights .... because of print S. had said.... we live in and out of badly written print .... but he didn't agree .... he felt free inside, he did go against conventionalities - occasionally ... he rebelled - though no-one listened - except Pete, then in history - Kant, Descartes, Chomsky .... they had rebelled and look at man's experiments with print .... Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations ... not a book but a masterpiece, like an oil painting .... individual notes

put together creating many themes.... but, but.... was he being possessed subversively .... was his subconscious being taken over by static dogmatic linear print .... then he was no different to the bees or the ants.... accepting the tyranny of rituals .... no dignity and freedom, just conditioned machines.... one up for Skinner....

John had said, best to burn all books .... oral communication is the hot line.... Susie said that Lawrence wrote that the great mass of humanity should never learn to read and write.... action not thought... he had to get through miles of print before he could shed his concrete cocoon, so he was a slave to print all right .... John learnt from talking to Pete day and night and to S and T .... the 'hotness' was immediate exposure to the simultaneous plurality of thought .... was reading really dead like the horse and cart - onwards then to electronic flashes between brain and brain .... did print really hold man's civilisation back .... yet he'd had fun reading now and then .... Sartre's Words .... print was only slow, clumsy, simplistic, linear if one made it so .... yet he had never really discovered the key to using print as a hot line .... S had asked a crucial question .... HOW DO WE CONVERT THE LINEARITY OF PRINT INTO THE PLURALITY OF THOUGHT?

Narrator

X ended his lunchtime review of the seminar with that question raging in his head. He wearily gathered his books, finished off his cigarette, and went off towards the library.

X The Onlooker

He'd start off with Rogers .... easy to read though ideas weren't simple, he felt excited, this was original stuff .... X felt he was entering a world rich in promise .... he felt himself being carried away by the exciting ideas ....

Narrator

For a long time X was immersed in 'Freedom-to-Learn', what was really going on in his head? Was he aware of a sympathetic cord between his childhood traumas at school and the world of learning offered by Rogers? - Did he appreciate the open-ended style and the immediate contact with the reader created by the dialogue inserts and the author's conversational approach? Was he building up a conceptual schema of the author's model of learning and relating the anecdotal examples to this schema? The test would come later. Rogers must have triggered something off, because X's last hour in the library was spent frantically searching for book after book. He was like a bee starved of nectar, dashing indiscriminately from flower to flower. He dipped into 'The Tractatus' into Kierkegaard, Heller's review of Kant, and 'The Social Contract' - Russeau's and Ardrey's, and Koestler's 'The Creative Act'.

X The Onlooker

You can't teach anybody anything, but help them to learn .... why was his brain so slow .... why was his head buzzing .... he began to feel scared... he'd made no notes ....what the hell had he been up to .... what if he couldn't remember it all .... perhaps it would sort itself out in his sleep .... should he test his memory out now .... let's see - overcrowded rats, solitary leopards, something about hierarchies of behaviour and obedience, the categorical imperative, was that Rogers

or Kant or Ardrey .... just bits and pieces .... and what was relevant for that essay on Montivation....? He'd better review his afternoon's reading .... he'd lost control all right, what had Pete said - ... high on print ... he'd enjoyed himself, been involved .... had he got sidetracked though - all that Ardrey stuff .... would he be able to select from the welter of data in his head .... only one day left to finish that essay and the project to finish as well .... he felt like a drink ....

Narrator

At 20.30 X settled himself down for the last tasks on his schedule, to draft notes for his essay and get on with his project. He'd missed out on his tutorial with L, he hadn't felt in the mood for bartering for a higher grade on his last essay. He spent the half hour in the refectory with Susie. That had ended in a row. He'd listened to Led Zeppelin with Pete and supplemented his shepherds pie with Chop Suey from the Take Away.

X The Onlooker

X disciplined himself for an intensive note-making session, no rote copying, no paraphrasing either, his own summaries .....
First Lyons on transformational grammar .... nicely explained, this was already summarized, he'd copy that bit down .....
Now Rogers .... now to summarize 'Freedom' ...., ...first discover the obstacles that prevent people from flowering, then be empathetic ..... what were the other points which came out of therapy? .... he couldn't locate them, he'd have to go through the whole book again .... he'd have to wade through all those anecdotes again .....
He'd still have to get hold of some of those set books, he'd pop over to see the girls later on, they usually got hold of the books promptly

and hung on to them .... deliberately he thought .... they were always back in the library the day after the cut-off date .... getting their own back probably .... This Rogers stuff had really sent him .... he'd like to confine his essay to Freedom-to-Learn .... he'd work all night to get a good plan, he felt excited .... he'd raged against those stereotyped methods, ... could he do it .... K just wouldn't take it.... but if he had good arguments, clear and concise .... produced a brilliant assignment .... he just might get an A .... or a D .... he was like Jonathan Seagull .... always aiming at something special, always crashing down .... he might get an F ... the energy drained out of him, he'd better play the game, present a wide range of ideas, refer to all the set books and the lecture, he began to feel robotish again .... he continued with his notes .... copied out some of the lecture notes .... drew up a plan .... Was he a rat in a Skinner box after all?....

Narrator

At midnight X crossed off the items on his itinerary for the day, wrote some notes in his Development column and prepared his schedule for the next day and got into bed.

X The Onlooker

He felt uneasy, depressed, panicky, if only he'd finished those notes, that project .... if only he'd concentrated on 'Freedom' that afternoon and used his SQ_3R on it.... he'd have more learning to show for the day.... but were these learning slogans really useful? .... Would it be better to contemplate using mantras like Pete? He found G.P.I.D. handy for organising his studies, LISAN had got him listening more effectively, his 'points for remembering' mnemonic worked now and then, and the SLOWER formula had helped his essay writing, and O.P.Q.R.S. had influenced the

quality of his note making .... funny though that mix of oblivion and awareness he felt reading Rogers, Kierkegaard and Ardrey that afternoon.... he should learn to control it ... how could he guarantee that the stuff was going in, sticking and coming out again later?....

If he didn't get involved, leave go, he got bored ... hell he couldn't remember an awful lot if he 'got involved' and if he concentrated on every sentence he read and used the SQ_3R method rigorously concentrating on every sentence he read, he could even remember silly details, but got bored to tears! X's eyes ached, his head ached, he felt a lead weight in the pit of his stomach. He'd never get that A, he'd never get that perfect control over his learning .... that feel for critical judgment, and good memory .... X dreamed down the labyrinthan ways of his own mind, down the arches of the days and months ahead .... the B.Ed. results, ... Susie, Patsie, and perhaps Joanna .... that terrific rugby tackle last Saturday .... that trip to Morocco next summer.....

Narrator

X is nearing the end of his college days. But there are many learning days left for him in his lifetime. Over how many miles of print will his eyes be driven? Will he by chance, happenstance, or through the influence of appropriate pedagogy, learn to use reading as a flexible tool to maximize his potential for learning. Will he learn THE WAY?

E N D

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